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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 18, 2010

Hopi Chairman, Vice-Chairman commend staff, patients on 10th Anniversary of Hopi Health Care Center

After 10 years, many see the facility as a blessing, despite the long process

KYKOTSMOVI, Ariz. – Ten years ago, a dream and vision that began years ago culminated with the construction of a much-needed Hopi Health Care Facility, and on Nov. 17, healthcare workers, patients and tribal leaders from Hopi, Tewa and Navajo gathered to celebrate its 10th year anniversary in Polacca, Ariz.

After 10 years, many see the facility as a blessing, despite the long process. In 1988, the Hopi Health Care Steering Committee was formed with support and endorsement of tribal leaders. A feasibility study was produced and accepted, which led to the approval of a landsite for the construction of the facility.

In 1997, the tribe celebrated the groundbreaking of the new facility. After construction in 2000, former CEO Daryl Melvin led the transition from the old Keams Canyon facility to the new one.



The Hopi Health Care Center celebrated its 10th Anniversary Nov. 17, 2010, in Polacca, Ariz. Pictured is Hopi Tribal Vice-Chairman Herman G. Honanie, Dr. Darren Vicenti, Chairman LeRoy N. Shingoitewa and CEO Capt. DeAlva Honahni. (Photo by Louella Nahsonhoya)

Today, Tribal representatives, including Hopi Tribal Chairman LeRoy N. Shingoitewa and Vice-Chairman Herman G. Honanie, joined Chief Executive Officer Capt. DeAlva Honahni to celebrate the anniversary of the state-of-the-art facility, which services more than 7,000 people and has brought healthcare closer to its patients.

Chairman Shingoitewa commended staff and patients of the healthcare facility for a successful 10th year anniversary and he commended Capt. Honahnie for her leadership.

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"I thank all the Hopi Health Care employees for their dedication and willingness to serve in the healthcare profession and I commend Captain Honahnie, the chief executive officer, for her leadership and for helping to create a model facility," Shingoitewa said. "My people, you were chosen for this profession. Always be proud of your skills and of who you are. We will always be here to lobby and support you to help this facility grow."

Vice Chairman Honanie also thanked the healthcare staff and reflected on a dental experience he had during his early years when children would line up outside an old dental trailer and the thought of going inside was dismal – unlike the current state-of-the-art one-stop service provided today.

"Today, I am proud of our staff and proud of our healthcare facility. You have all committed yourselves to serve our Hopi, Tewa and Navajo people," Honanie said. "I want to thank you all for that. We all have a responsibility to take care of ourselves, wellness should be part of healthcare. Be proud of the work you do here, because you are providing a valuable service to our people – thank you."

Capt. Honahnie expressed her gratitude for being provided the opportunity to return home and to help her Hopi people. She said she faced many challenges, but is pleased with the dreams and vision of former tribal leaders who helped to set the focus that she works to accomplish.

"I give my pledge to work diligently and to help bring mainstream services to Hopi, like any other big healthcare facility, so our people can get the services they need, so they can get well and stay well," Capt. Honahnie said. "We don't want illness to take away our people."

Dr. Darren Vicenti, clinical director and a Hopi Tribal member, said he is also pleased to be home to serve his people as well.

"We are a fully accredited facility and we have met all required standards," Vicenti explained. "Within the past five years, we have seen a 5% increase in user population."

A part of the program included a Power Point presentation by Chief Nurse Executive Carletta Joshevama, Hopi, reflecting on the journey from the old Keams Canyon Hospital to the new facility in Polacca. She explained that many improvements were made in providing healthcare with the use of new and innovative equipment in the new facility and with the addition of more skilled providers.

Chairman Shingoitewa thanked all the attendees, staff and event organizers. He also thanked the Hopi Health Care Center's Commissioned Corps for posting the flags, Bruce Talawyma for serving as master of ceremony, Leonard Talaswaima for his prayer, Miss Hopi Jeanetta Honie and her First Attendant Jenna Lamson, and to the runners who made their long trek to celebrate the event.

The event concluded with a presentation of a plaque to the Hopi Health Care board commemorating the 10th anniversary.

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